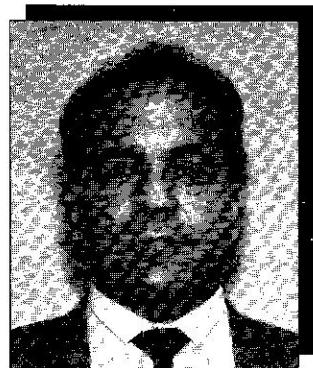


Certification Corner

First Liaison Hearings Held

by George P. Kousaleos



The first liaison hearings on National Certification were held on February 2, 1991, in San Diego, California. Liaison representatives and Council members met to gather information and advice from official liaison representatives on issues relating to National Certification. The hearings were an excellent opportunity for Council members to answer questions, and explain the efforts of the past year as well as future goals.

The liaison program was first established at the March 1990 inaugural meeting of the National Certification Steering Committee. The program provides a system of communication between the Committee and the massage therapy and bodywork profession. The liaisons represent various massage disciplines, schools, membership associations, clinics, and licensing regulators. Currently, there are over 100 official liaison representatives.

The first liaison hearings were attended by members of the Certification Council, liaison representatives, and other interested members of the profession. Following an explanation of the hearing format, introductions of the Council members, and the reports by Committee Chairpersons, the liaisons began oral presentations, followed by a session of questions and answers.

Here is a sample of some of the suggestions made:

Concerning seating requirements:

- No restrictions, seat everyone.

- Should include hands on experience and at least 100 hours of education.
- Include didactic and practical experience.

Concerning the National Board:

- Include significant representation from each of the major bodywork areas.
- Establish two, three year terms on a rotational system.
- Include educators, therapists, regulators, and consumer members.

On the examination:

- Test should be constructed for success, with pre-test aids.
- Should not be Swedish or medically oriented, practical exams in specialties should be optional.
- Make it affordable; allow those with financial difficulties to take it for free.

On the ongoing process:

- More information about National Certification should be disseminated, more forums and discussions like this one.
- Slow down the process to include more individuals.
- The members of the Council are doing an exemplary job. Keep up the good work!

These statements are a small sample of the valuable information gathered during the liaison hearings. The Council has decided more hearings are necessary, along with presentations, forums, and discussions at state, regional, and national gatherings. In 1990, Council members presented information about National Certification at over 20 meetings nationwide. This effort will be expanded in 1991, and will include the formation of a National Certification Newsletter.

Critics of National Certification have claimed that much information presented by the Certification Steering Committee and Council is primarily promotional, rather than educational and objective. The Council respects those with different opinions, but it will continue to develop a professional entry-level examination representative of the knowledge and responsibilities inherent in massage therapy, as verified by the job analysis study.

By the time this article is published, a testing company will have been selected, and the first stage of test construction will have begun. There is still much work the Council and liaisons must consider. Speaking for the Council members, I welcome your written statements on all of these issues, and furthermore, invite each of you to participate in upcoming forums and meetings.

The Certification Council would like to thank the many schools, asso-

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ciations, and organizations who sent liaison representatives to the hearings. These included the American Massage Therapy Association; the American Polarity Therapy Association; the Head, Heart, and Hands Forum; the International Myomassethics Federation; the Bay Area Bodywork Therapy Guild; the Hellerwork Association; the Trager Institute; the International Reflexology Institute; the International Professional School of Bodywork; the Desert Institute of the Healing Arts; the Sports Massage Training Institute; the CORE Institute; and the Ohio College of Massotherapy. ♦

Editor's Note: The written transcript of the first Liaison Hearings will be available by April 15, 1991. Copies of the transcript can be ordered through:

National Education Office
1130 W. North Shore Ave.
Chicago, IL 60626
(312) 761-AMTA

It is here!

Copies of the job analysis, **A National Study of the Profession of Massage Therapy/Bodywork** are available through the AMTA Headquarters Office. The study provides detailed statistical information about what massage therapists do on the job, and the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for competent practice. Copies of the 34 page results cost \$9.95. The complete 150 page document can be purchased for \$25.00.



News... . . . In The News...

A Caring Touch Soothes the Abused and Homeless

Massage as a community service was the focus of a January *Chicago Tribune* article. The article, written by Angela Smyth, featured a Chicago School of Massage Therapy outreach program, which gives student volunteers the opportunity to provide massage to women in Chicago's shelters for the abused and homeless.

The article credits Therese Forsthofel, the school's Outreach Director, with the idea of moving massage out of the clinic and into the community. The outreach program now includes 15 centers, shelters and hospitals, where volunteer therapists work with battered women, people with AIDS, rape victims, and other abused women. In the article, Bob King, Co-Director of the school and Past President of AMTA, stresses the importance of funding research and documenting the benefits of massage for those who are in need of physical and psychological comfort.

(*Chicago Tribune* - 1/27/91 - Sec. 6, p. 2)

Buying Relief

In an article in the *Washington Post* about what Americans will buy during a recession, Richard Thalheimer, president of the upscale retailer Sharper Image said, "Anything relating to massage or mental is selling well. I know it's because people are buying relief."

(*Washington Post* - 1/11/91 - p. F1)

Health Care News..

An article by Carol Saline in the January issue of *Philadelphia* magazine entitled, "The Price is Wrong,"

summed up reports on the health care system which have appeared during the past few months: "The [health care] system – in particular, who gets what care – is out of control. We spend \$ 2500 per person for health care in the U.S., which is 50 percent more than Canada, twice that of Japan, and triple that of England. Yet people in those countries live as long as we do and have lower infant mortality rates."

(*Philadelphia* - 1/91 - p. 35-39)

Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan reported skyrocketing health care costs in the *Washington Post* in December. The nation's outlay on health climbed to \$604.1 billion in 1989, an increase of 11.1 percent over 1988. Health outlays as a share of gross national product rose from 11.2 percent in 1988 to 11.6 percent in 1989, the highest figure for any developed nation. In 1960, the U.S. spent only 5.3 percent of GNP on health.

(*Washington Post* - 12/21/90 - p. A3)

What is happening in response? A *Washington Post* article, "Devising a Cure for High Costs in Health Care," reported that for the first time since the mid-1970's, supporters of national health insurance believe they have a legitimate chance of winning congressional approval for a universal health care bill. The article pointed out that recently 55 unions, 35 corporations, health care groups and public interest lobbying groups formed a coalition for health care reform to develop a proposal to overhaul the nation's health care system.

(*Washington Post* - 12/17/91 - p. H1)

On March 6, the *Washington Post* reported that a national health insur-